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TRENDS IN CHINA'S KOREA POLICY

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January 1984

Author: Beth Green


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PREFACE

This study examines trends in Chinese statements on the reunification of the Korean peninsula, talks between North and South Korea, the military balance on the Korean peninsula, and the role of the United States in Korea. China's strategic interests in Korea are briefly introduced, a chronology of North and South Korean proposals for reunification is provided, and Chinese comments on the issues since 1977 are examined.

Open source materials, primarily Renmin Ribao [People's Daily] and Xinhua News Agency commentaries, were used in the preparation of this study.

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TRENDS IN CHINA'S KOREA POLICY

1. BACKGROUND

The Korean peninsula, located at the center of Northeast Asia and surrounded by China, Japan, and the USSR, is of great strategic importance to China. Since the Korean War (1950-53), Beijing has been especially concerned about the future of the divided peninsula because of the profound implications it has for China's security. If there were a renewed military conflict between North and South Korea, China would undoubtedly become involved, whereas a united Korea would be a powerful neighbor to contend with, possibly even more independent and less tractable than the present-day North Korean regime. Beijing's primary foreign policy goal in its relations with the Korean peninsula is to prevent the emergence of another pro-Soviet neighbor on its border. China must provide enough support for Pyongyang to keep it from shifting its allegiance to the USSR while avoiding giving encouragement to North Korea's more bellicose intentions to the point of a renewed outbreak of hostilities. In promoting a resolution of the Korean situation, China must also consider that it will affect its relations with the other major powers in the area, Japan, the Soviet Union, and the United States.

In the early 1970s, North Korea changed its unification strategy from one of military confrontation to one of publicly promoting "peaceful unification" while covertly attempting to instigate instability in the South. This outwardly more reasonable approach facilitated the improvement of China-North Korea relations which had become cool during the Cultural Revolution. In 1971 North Korea announced an eight-point solution for "peaceful reunification," calling for the withdrawal of US troops as its first condition. This proposal was immediately supported by Beijing. In 1972 the two Korean Governments held talks and issued a joint communique on 4 July on the "Basic Principles of National Unity." In 1972 and 1973 negotiations were held by the Red Cross organizations of North and South Korea concerning family reunification. By mid-1974 the North-South talks had reached a stalemate, due to differing interpretations of such key terms as "outside forces." Beijing blamed this entirely on South Korean insincerity and "sabotage" of the joint communique.

Since the improvement of China-North Korea relations in the early 1970s, Chinese public statements have supported North Korea's position on reunification as one component of Beijing's backing for the Pyongyang regime. Because of China's overriding concern that offending North Korea could push it closer to the Soviet Union, Chinese public statements on reunification generally do not deviate from the North Korean position, and often merely repeat North Korean pronouncements without comment. These public statements may also differ from comments made in private by Chinese officials to their American or Japanese counterparts. In addition there is often a slight difference in emphasis between Chinese statements published for domestic or international distribution, and those broadcast or published strictly for audiences in North Korea. The latter, along with North Korean press reports of statements by Chinese officials, tend to include stronger anti-US sentiments which more closely follow the North Korean position.

2. CHINESE COMMENT ON KOREAN REUNIFICATION PROPOSALS AND TALKS

Since the improvement of its relations with North Korea in 1970, Beijing's public statements have consistently supported North Korea's official position on the Korean question. Editorials in Renmin Ribao in the early 1970s repeatedly supported the "just stand" of the Korean Workers Party and Korean Government and the struggle of the Korean people in "ousting outside intervention and winning the independent and peaceful reunification of the fatherland."¹ In a joint communique at the conclusion of Kim Il Sung's visit to China in May 1975, the two sides agreed that unification should be achieved in accordance with North Korean policy, rejecting any "two Koreas" formulation. China also demanded the withdrawal of US troops from South Korea. The communique did not address the question of resuming talks between North and South Korea which had been suspended since 1974. In September 1975, Beijing rejected a proposal by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger for a four-power conference on Korea, to include China and the United States as well as the two Koreas.

Chinese public statements supported the North Korean reunification proposal of 1977, calling it "very reasonable" and "of weighty significance." (For an overview and chronology of North and South Korean reunification proposals 1977-84, refer to the Appendix.) Chinese comments restated the North Korea position that "the prolonged presence of the US troops in South Korea is the basic obstacle to the reunification of Korea and the source of tension on the Korean peninsula."² Beijing criticized South Korea's call for a mutual non-aggression treaty before a US troop withdrawal as nothing but an attempt to perpetuate the division of the country. Chinese comment implicitly denied a role for foreign powers in the resolution of the Korean question by insisting that the issue be solved by the Korean people themselves. Chinese support for the North Korean 1977 proposal was reiterated on numerous subsequent occasions.

During his May 1978 visit to North Korea, Chinese Communist Party Chairman Hua Guofeng undoubtedly pleased his hosts by denouncing the US troop presence in South Korea as "a policy of aggression and division" and by assuring Pyongyang that Beijing recognized it as the "sole legitimate sovereign Korean state."³ These strong statements in support of the North Korean position were indicative of the closeness of China-North Korean relations at the time.

Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping and Japanese Premier Takeo Fukuda discussed the Korean question during the former's visit to Japan in October 1978--only a month after visiting Pyongyang. Deng stressed that fears that North Korea would invade the South were "groundless." Deng reportedly also said that Korea would be unified eventually, "in 100 years if not ten."⁴ This could be interpreted to mean that China would like a continuation of the status quo or peaceful coexistence between the two Koreas. Another explanation is that it simply reflects a Marxist belief in the historical inevitability of a "just stand."

In January 1979, an editorial in Renmin Ribao discussed a new North Korean reunification proposal which featured a conference of North and South political parties and organizations. The editorial called the proposal "rational, reasonable, and practical" and said that "the Chinese people warmly praise and resolutely support the new effort made by the fraternal Korean people for the realization of the reunification of the fatherland." The editorial held "foreign aggression and intervention" entirely responsible for the failure of Korea to

achieve reunification, and called for the withdrawal of all US forces from South Korea. Without mentioning South Korea's reunification proposals which preceded those of the North by a few days in January 1979, Beijing called the South's readiness to enter into a dialog with the North "an encouraging development."⁵

During his February 1979 visit to Japan, Deng reportedly refused Japanese Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira's request for a greater Chinese role in settling the Korean problem. Deng supposedly reiterated his support for the North Korean stand, claiming that there was no danger of a North-South military clash, and that it would be better not to interfere in Korean affairs. Deng's reply to Ohira also ruled out the possibility of a dialog between Beijing and South Korea on reunification.⁶ Until the China-South Korea negotiations on the hijacked airliner in 1983, Beijing's public position ruled out any direct government-to-government contact with Seoul. AFP reported a brief meeting between Deng and former South Korean Premier Kim Chong-pil during Deng's 1978 visit to Japan, but the Japanese Government called the report "sheer speculation."

Chinese statements expressed support for the North Korean position on the US-South Korean proposal for tripartite talks made in July 1979, calling it "absolutely correct." A speech by the North Korean Prime Minister Yi Chong-ok made it apparent that Pyongyang considered its "rejection" of the talks not a rejection but actually a counteroffer which for the first time would allow South Korea to attend DPRK-US talks as an observer.⁸ Beijing agreed with this positive view of the North Korean position. On the occasion of the anniversary of the signing of the China-North Korea friendship treaty, Foreign Minister Huang Hua called the proposal "reasonable and constructive." He also urged the United States to respond to Pyongyang's proposal by meeting with North Korean representatives to discuss American troop withdrawal and the replacement of the armistice agreement with a peace treaty.

An April 1980 article in Shijie Zhishi [World Knowledge]⁹ discussed in depth the development of the North-South Korean dialog from the first set of talks in 1972 through the series taking place in 1980. The article blamed the lack of progress in previous talks on Seoul, saying that the South "always lacked sincerity and looked for excuses to close the dialog," but said that substantial progress and major breakthroughs would be possible "as long as the South Korean authorities make a fresh start." The article also mentioned the Soviet threat to peace and stability in Asia, especially criticizing Soviet hypocrisy in mouthing support for North Korea while making covert and overt contacts with the South Korean authorities.

In commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the entry of Chinese troops into the Korean War (25 October 1980), China called Kim Il Sung's October 1980 renewed proposal for the establishment of a "Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo" the "correct road to end the division between the South and North and achieve reunification."¹⁰ At a Beijing banquet, Chinese Chief of General Staff Yang Dezhi also praised Kim Il Sung's "constructive formula" and denounced Chun Doo Hwan's "clique for obstructing the reunification of the country and for its fascist atrocities."¹¹

Several months later Premier Zhao Ziyang reiterated Chinese support for Kim Il Sung's confederal republic proposal, and stated that "there should be no outside

interference by foreign forces where Korea's reunification is concerned." Zhao called for a US withdrawal from South Korea and for the US to enter into a dialog with the North in order to conclude a peace agreement.¹²

An article in Renmin Ribao¹³ strongly criticized Chun Doo Hwan's proposal for an exchange of visits at the highest level in January 1981, calling it "a very clumsy performance." The article charged Chun with creating a tense situation by clamoring about the danger of war, and attempting to divide Korea forever while hiding behind a posture favoring unification. Later in 1981, two Renmin Ribao articles emphasized Chinese opposition to the presence of US forces in South Korea. On the 20th anniversary of the China-DPRK Friendship Treaty, Renmin Ribao commended Kim Il Sung's reunification proposals and forcefully called for a US troop withdrawal, saying "There is no reason for the US forces to remain in South Korea. All of them should be pulled out."¹⁴ On the anniversary of the United Nations General Assembly's 1975 resolution on Korea, Renmin Ribao again called the US military presence in South Korea "a major obstacle in the way of the independent and peaceful reunification of Korea" and called reunification "a matter of great urgency."¹⁵

In early 1982 Chinese comments agreed with Kim Il Sung's rejection of Chun Doo Hwan's proposal as "an attempt to mislead the public and evade his responsibility for stalling the peaceful reunification of Korea." Chun's proposal was called "both unrealistic and hypocritical" because the presence of US troops and the "fascist" and "suppressive" rule of Chun Doo Hwan preclude "serious consultations on reunification."¹⁶ Chinese commentary on a world conference for Korean reunification held in Finland stressed that US troops "illegally stationed in South Korea" were the main cause for the delay in reunification because of their encouragement of Chun in his "two Koreas" policy.¹⁷

The February 1982 proposal by Pyongyang for a conference of political figures from the North and South was lauded by Chinese commentary as "a fresh major effort by the northern half of Korea to break the deadlock over the country's reunification. . . . It is unprecedented both in the scope of fields from which people are invited to the conference and the strata they represent."¹⁸ During a visit to Pyongyang, Chinese Minister of National Defense Geng Biao voiced full support for Kim Il Sung's reunification proposal and the "Korean people's sacred cause of the independent and peaceful reunification of the country." He also delivered particularly virulent criticism of the United States, saying that "The United States must discontinue criminal acts in stamping out democracy and obstructing reunification."¹⁹

Chinese support for Kim Il Sung's reunification plan was reiterated during the North Korean leader's official visit to China in September 1982. The Renmin Ribao editorial welcoming his visit called his confederal republic proposal and 10-point program "the most realistic plan to bring about the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula." The United States was criticized for refusing to withdraw its troops and "aiding and abetting the Chun Doo Hwan clique in splitting Korea."²⁰

Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian visited North Korea in May 1983 immediately after the first direct China-South Korea contact over the airline hijacking incident. He probably went with the dual purpose of expressing displeasure that North Korea had been unable to render assistance in intercepting the hijacking and reassuring

Pyongyang that Chinese contact with Seoul did not threaten China's firm commitment to the North Korean Government. In a speech at his reception in Pyongyang, Wu Xueqian said that the Chinese Government and people would "as ever" support the North's reunification proposals. He restated the idea that the withdrawal of US troops would eliminate tension on the peninsula, since "the present division of Korea into the North and South and the tense confrontation between them are entirely ascribable to the US imperialists' aggression and interference."²¹ Wu's speech contained slightly less harsh criticism of the US presence in South Korea than most Chinese statements from the preceding year. At the commemoration of the China-North Korea treaty anniversary in July 1983, the representative of the Chinese Embassy in Pyongyang made the standard statement that the "Chinese people resolutely support the Korean people's just demand for the withdrawal of US troops from South Korea" and for reunification according to Kim Il Sung's Confederal Republic of Koryo proposal.²²

In a late September 1983 meeting in Beijing between US Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and Deng Xiaoping, Deng reportedly expressed China's willingness to cooperate with the United States and Japan to ease tension on the Korean Peninsula.²³

The North Korean bombing in Burma on 9 October 1983 that killed 17 prominent South Koreans presented a dilemma for China--to condemn the massacre without overly offending North Korea. According to Japanese sources, during CCP General Secretary Hu Yaobang's visit to Japan in November, he maintained that Beijing did not have the details of what happened in Rangoon but was against all terrorism. In response to Prime Minister Nakasone's suggestion that China be involved in resolving the Korean situation, Hu replied that it would be good for the countries concerned to talk.²⁴

On 11 January 1984 North Korea formally proposed tripartite talks to involve the United States and South Korea in discussions of a peace treaty between the United States and the North and a declaration of nonaggression between the North and South. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced the same day that China "actively supports" the proposal and believed that tripartite talks "could be conducive to easing tension on the Korean peninsula and promoting the peaceful reunification of North and South Korea."²⁵ Commentaries over the following days praised the proposal, calling it "another major endeavor undertaken by the northern side of Korea" and saying that it reflected the sincerity of the North. Renmin Ribao urged the United States and South Korea to "seize this opportune moment" and hold the talks "so that the problem of the peaceful reunification of Korea will be reasonably solved as soon as possible."²⁶ A radio commentary called the proposal "very well-timed and constructive."²⁷ The Korean situation was discussed during Premier Zhao Ziyang's visit to Washington. The Chinese press only reported Zhao's "hope that the tension in the Korean peninsula could be relaxed,"²⁸ but according to Reuters, he said that China would actively support tripartite negotiations.²⁹

There have been no statements in the Chinese press regarding President Ronald Reagan's proposal during Zhao's visit for a four-way conference to include China in the Korean reunification negotiations. AFP reported an interview with a senior Chinese foreign affairs official who denied that such a proposal had been formally made. The official said that China did plan to play a role in settling the Korean issue and expressed total support for Pyongyang's recent tripartite

talks proposal, but, with regard to four-way talks, quoted Zhao as having said, "No one has asked China to participate in such negotiations and we haven't considered the possibility."³⁰ Since one of Beijing's highest held principles in foreign affairs is "noninterference in the internal affairs of any country," China may prefer to act behind the scenes rather than risk appearing hypocritical in world opinion by participating in talks on Korean reunification, an internal Korean issue. China did demonstrate flexibility, however, by dealing directly with Seoul rather than through a third party over the hijacking incident in May 1983. Even if China is amenable to four-party talks, it is likely Beijing will wait until such a proposal comes from the North Korean side before publicly supporting it, just as was the case with tripartite talks.

3. CHINESE STATEMENTS ON NORTH/SOUTH KOREA BALANCE OF FORCES

Chinese public statements have not specifically addressed the issue of the balance of forces on the Korean peninsula, but instead have focussed on the threat of war, especially the likelihood that the North would invade the South, and whether China would agree to exercise a restraining influence on Pyongyang. When Kim Il Sung visited China in 1975 there were reports in the Western press that China had rejected his plan to invade the South while it appeared unstable and while the last Americans were leaving Vietnam.³¹ Chinese sources reported by Kyodo called this "nothing but propaganda" and maintained that North Korea had no intention of "liberating" the South by force. The sources insisted that China and North Korea had reached complete agreement on every issue they discussed in drawing up their 1975 joint communique.³² In 1976 a British official reported, after visiting Beijing, that Foreign Minister Qiao Guanhua has assured him that any talk of war in Korea was "out of the question."³³

Chinese insistence that North Korea does not threaten the South militarily was especially noticeable in Chinese criticism of US-South Korean joint military exercises. In criticizing TEAM SPIRIT-83 in a broadcast for the Korean audience, the Chinese commentator said that the "so-called threat of a southward invasion does not exist at all" and called the US claim that the exercises were purely defensive "a totally sheer lie."³⁴

Although Beijing certainly has some degree of influence on the North Korean leadership, in the past it has rarely admitted to any ability to control the affairs of Pyongyang. But during CCP General Secretary Hu Yaobang's visit to Japan in November 1983, he reportedly told Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone that China had twice told North Korea to avoid tension on the peninsula.³⁵ This break with past reticence appeared only in Western sources, however.

4. CHINESE COMMENTS ON THE US ROLE IN SOUTH KOREA

a. Public Statements

Chinese statements against the US role in South Korea vary from simply stressing that the Korean problem must be resolved by the Korean people themselves without outside interference, to calling the United States the major obstacle to reunification, to denouncing the aggression of US imperialism or even "hegemonism," to calling the US presence "criminal." A 1977 Renmin Ribao article noted that, under the pressure of world opinion, President Jimmy Carter had agreed to withdraw US ground forces from South Korea, but charged that the US

would leave its air and naval forces "to continue obstructing the Korean people's cause of independent and peaceful reunification." The Chinese statement called for the withdrawal of all forces "completely and immediately."³⁶ In 1979 Beijing seemed slightly more reluctant to call directly for the withdrawal of US troops and put more emphasis on the inevitability of Korean reunification. This was most likely due to a cooling of Beijing-Pyongyang relations and the simultaneous improvement in Chinese relations with the United States. As tensions in US-China relations began to surface in 1981 and especially 1982, Chinese criticism of the US role in South Korea was restored to its previous level of virulence. A Renmin Ribao article on US arms sales to South Korea blamed the US Government and the South Korean authorities for escalating tension.³⁷ In July 1981 while visiting Pyongyang, Premier Zhao Ziyang increased the scope of criticism of the US role by charging that it was not only a major obstacle to Korean reunification, but also "a major factor in the instability of Northeast Asia."³⁸

Chinese criticism of the US role in South Korea reached a high pitch with comments on the US-South Korea joint military exercises in 1982 and 1983. In 1982, a Chinese broadcast to Korea called the 1982 exercises "a grave situation threatening the northern half."³⁹ During Chinese Defense Minister Geng Biao's visit to North Korea in June 1982, he even referred to the US troop presence and support for Seoul as "hegemonism" and part of a "plot to create 'two Koreas'."⁴⁰ Although this charge was not made during Kim Il Sung's visit to China in September, it was repeated again during a Chinese parliamentary delegation's visit to Pyongyang in October 1982.

In early 1983, Chinese statements again stridently criticized US military actions in South Korea, calling the transfer of weapons and forces for TEAM SPIRIT-83 a "perverted action" which had "not only jeopardized the prospects for the independent and peaceful reunification and deepened the North-South split, but also seriously endangered stability in the Korean peninsula. The Chinese people resolutely oppose such arrogant and reckless acts of the United States."⁴¹ The view that the present Korean situation was due to the obstructions of the American side, and that the US forces must withdraw as soon as possible, was reiterated in an article published on the anniversary of the Korean armistice agreement.⁴² Another article repeated this criticism the day after President Ronald Reagan arrived in South Korea for a 3-day tour.⁴³

Most recently in response to Pyongyang's proposal for tripartite talks, Chinese commentary has commended the proposal that North Korea and the United States conclude a peace agreement and discuss the problem of withdrawing US troops from the South. Criticism of the US role in South Korea has been toned down considerably to say that the "very tense situation" was "wholly created by the United States and the South Korean authorities," without more colorful adjectives such as "perverted," "illegal," and "criminal." A Chinese commentary concludes with the hope that the US and South Korean authorities "will positively respond to the sincere appeal of the DPRK." Until the fate of the January 1984 proposal for tripartite talks is conclusive, Chinese comment will probably refrain from overly strident attacks on the United States' role in South Korea.

b. Private Statements

Chinese comments on the role of the United States in South Korea afford an example of the occasional divergence between public and private statements in foreign policy matters. Because of their nature as private comments made by

Chinese officials to their foreign counterparts, such comments seldom appear in the Chinese press, and only rarely are published as vague and unofficial reports in Western sources. A recent Washington Post report referred to China's "two-track policy," saying that "Publicly, Peking supports Kim's demands for a withdrawal of US troops from South Korea and the overthrow of the Seoul Government. Privately, Peking is said to agree with Washington on the need to avoid clashes."⁴⁴ In 1976 members of US Congressional delegations to China came back with reports that Chinese leaders, including Foreign Minister Qiao Guanhua, had assured them that China actually "had no real objection" to the US military presence in South Korea, because "in broad terms, they do not object to US forces in places where the Russians would move in."⁴⁵ A similar but vague report in the Japanese press in 1977 said that "it seems that China has transmitted its intention to the US of opposing the withdrawal of US ground forces from the ROK, and that it is requesting the US to station the forces in the ROK continuously."⁴⁶ Because of China's cautiousness in issuing statements that could possibly offend Pyongyang or make China appear overly pro-American in the eyes of Third World countries, published Chinese comments favoring a continuing US presence in Korea are exceedingly infrequent. Many analysts of the situation conclude, however, that in practical terms China certainly could not be opposed to the US presence in Korea because of the counterweight it provides against the Soviet Union.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Chinese comments since 1977 on the reunification of Korea, the military balance and threat of war there, and the US role in South Korea have reflected Beijing's strategic concerns as well as broad foreign policy objectives. China's highest strategic priority in the area is to preclude the emergence of another pro-Soviet neighbor on its border by providing the right degree of support for Pyongyang, while at the same time preventing the escalation of tension to the point of war. Because of this, Chinese statements have consistently voiced support for North Korea's position, commending the confederal republic solution, and calling for the withdrawal of US troops from South Korea. This support has varied in tone depending on the audience for which it was intended and other factors such as the status of US-China relations. Chinese criticism of US support for South Korea and the US military presence there was less strident after the normalization of US-China relations in 1979, but became more strongly critical and anti-American in tone in 1981 and 1982 when US-China relations were more strained. Joint South Korea-US military exercises in 1982 and 1983 also brought forth harsh criticism from the Chinese side.

Another foreign policy objective affecting Chinese commentary on Korean reunification is Beijing's own goal of the reunification of China, to include Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao. Chinese reunification strategy, like that of North Korea, also changed during the 1970s from one of "liberation" to more rational proposals for talks leading to reunification. Chinese preference for the confederal solution over any scheme of cross-recognition may have been influenced by Chinese fear of seeing a "two Chinas" formula applied to Taiwan, especially before the recognition of Beijing by the United States. This may still be a factor behind China's support for Pyongyang's position, although diplomatically Beijing has already succeeded in winning the recognition of almost all of the world's major powers. Unlike the Koreas which are cross-recognized by many Third World nations, no nation has been able to recognize both

Beijing and Taipei. Kim Il Sung's confederal republic proposal may also be favored by Beijing because of its similarity to the proposals China has made to Taiwan and Hong Kong since 1979 which have increasingly stressed that a degree of autonomy would be possible, as long as it exists within the framework of national unity and Chinese sovereignty.

Chinese statements on Korean reunification also reflect broad Chinese foreign policy objectives. Because of the importance Beijing places on its image in the Third World, public Chinese statements concerning various problem situations in the world tend to be ideological in nature, and are often quite different from what observers believe to be Beijing's true pragmatic interests with regard to a particular region. The following principles can be found in Chinese commentary on international affairs: opposition to any foreign, especially superpower, presence or interference in the "internal affairs" of any country; a belief that all national or regional problems should be solved by the "people themselves"; and a strong emphasis on the importance of national unity. This is evident in Chinese statements on Korean reunification, where these principles are expressed in this view: The lack of a peaceful resolution is due to the "meddling" of a superpower, the United States, which should withdraw from Korea so that the Korean people will be able to solve their problems by themselves, in order to achieve "the great national cause of independent and peaceful reunification of the fatherland." In order to understand China's actual pragmatic policy toward the Korean question, Chinese public statements in support of Pyongyang must be seen in context with private statements to the contrary, and in the context of Beijing's strategic interests in countering the Soviet Union's growing power in East Asia.

APPENDIX

NORTH AND SOUTH KOREAN PROPOSALS FOR TALKS

1. OVERVIEW

Since 1977 both Koreas have periodically made proposals toward the goal of easing tension and achieving reunification, and two series of talks have been held, but no agreements have been reached. South Korean proposals have included provisions for cross-recognition of the North and South by the United States and the Soviet Union, dual admission to the United Nations, and the development of relations following the example of the two German states, if only as a temporary measure leading eventually to reunification. South Korean proposals have emphasized the need for a nonaggression treaty between the North and South before the withdrawal of US troops. Seoul has called for direct talks between the two Premiers or talks between representatives at commensurate levels, while North Korean proposals have emphasized conferences of North and South public and political figures, often including those in disfavor with South Korean authorities at the time. Pyongyang has rejected cross-recognition and dual admission to the United Nations on the grounds that they would only perpetuate the division of Korea. Since 1973 North Korea has consistently called for North-South talks to focus on the establishment of a confederation, to be called the Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo.

North Korea also has called for bilateral talks with the United States to conclude a peace treaty. Until the most recent North Korean proposal in January 1984, Pyongyang distinguished between talks with the United States on the issues of a peace treaty and the withdrawal of US forces and North-South talks on Korean reunification. This was presumably because the South was not a signatory to the 1953 armistice and also in order to preclude foreign intervention in the process of Korean reunification. In 1979 Pyongyang rejected the US-South Korean proposal for tripartite talks, but conceded for the first time that Seoul could be allowed to take part in United States-North Korean talks as an observer. The 1984 proposal calls for three-party talks including South Korea. North Korea says that the tripartite talks should discuss a US-Korea peace treaty and a North-South nonaggression declaration, but also says that a guarantee for peace can only be reached after US troops are withdrawn from Korea. This would seem to minimize or exclude the role of other parties, such as the United States, in achieving Pyongyang's goal of "an independent and peaceful reunification."

2. CHRONOLOGY

- ° 25 January 1977--North Korea proposed a North-South consultative conference of public and political figures to discuss reunification. The proposal included as preconditions removing the danger of war by withdrawing US troops and nuclear weapons and eliminating the "fascist" and "anti-communist" policy in the South. South Korea charged that the proposal was "another attempt to cover up a communist plot to occupy the South by force" unless the North agreed to the South's repeated proposal for a nonaggression pact.

- ° 28 January 1977--South Korean co-chairman of the South-North Coordinating Committee proposed a discussion of arrangements for conclusion of a nonaggression agreement. Pyongyang rejected the proposal.
- ° 19 January 1979--South Korean President Park Chung Hee called for the resumption of North-South talks "at any place, at any time, at any level" without any preconditions, to discuss all problems, prevent war, and achieve reunification.
- ° 23 January 1979--North Korea proposed to convene an all-Korea national convention in early September.
- ° 17 February 1979--The South Korean representative of the South-North Coordinating Committee met at Panmunjon with North Korean representatives three times in February and March. The talks ended when South Korea objected to the North's Democratic Front for the Unification of the Fatherland as a negotiating partner and the North did not send representatives at another level.
- ° 1 July 1979--South Korean President Park Chung Hee and US President Jimmy Carter proposed the convening of tripartite talks between South and North Korea and the United States to reduce tension in the region. Pyongyang rejected the proposal through a 10 July radio broadcast.
- ° 12 January 1980--After the assassination of South Korean President Park in October 1979, North Korea proposed talks between the Premiers on reunification, referring to South Korea as the Republic of Korea for the first time in an official North Korean document. North Korea also proposed a conference of North and South political parties and organizations. Seoul rejected a North Korean proposal for a united Olympic team on the grounds that there was insufficient time to prepare. Preliminary talks to arrange a meeting between Premiers took place at Panmunjon beginning in February, but disagreements on the meeting site and agenda, in addition to border incidents and domestic unrest in the South, eventually led to the cancellation of talks by North Korea in September 1980.
- ° 26 September 1980--South Korea proposed talks between Premiers in either Seoul, Pyongyang, or Panmunjon, with the agenda left to the Premiers to decide, but the proposal was ignored by the North.
- ° 10 October 1980--At the 6th Korean Workers' Party Congress, North Korean President Kim Il Sung revived his 1973 proposal for the reunification of Korea as a confederal state according to a 10-point plan.
- ° 12 January 1981--South Korean President Chun Doo Hwan proposed that the highest authorities in the South and North exchange visits. His invitation to President Kim Il Sung to visit Seoul "without any conditions attached" was rejected by the North. On 15 June 1981 Chun renewed his proposal to exchange visits at the highest level at any location, including a third country. He also suggested that exchanges begin in cultural and economic spheres, but the North again rejected the offer, calling Chun a "traitor" and not fit to "be a party to a dialogue with us."

- ° 22 January 1982--South Korean President Chun made detailed proposals for reunification through a conference which would draw up a draft constitution. North Korea rejected the proposals on 26 January, declaring that the establishment of a confederal republic was the only way to achieve reunification. Pyongyang also called for the withdrawal of American troops and "democratization" of the South.
- ° 1 February 1982--The South Korean Minister of National Unification proposed a list of projects for cooperation between the South and North, including telephone and highway links, family contacts, cultural and sports exchanges, trade, and calling off propaganda. The North Korean Reunification Committee put forward alternative proposals several days later for a conference of North and South political figures. In late February Seoul denounced as "outrageous" the proposed list of South Korean public figures issued by the North, which included no representatives of any existing political parties. The South made a counterproposal for talks between nine high-ranking officials from each side and mentioned the possibility of constructing a railway link.
- ° 3 July 1982--The South Korean Co-chairman of the North-South Coordinating Committee Min Kwan Shik called for the resumption of talks in a statement marking the 10th anniversary of the 4 July 1972 Joint Communiqué between the North and South.
- ° 18 January 1983--In his New Year policy statement, South Korean President Chun proposed direct negotiations on reunification between the North and South without external interference. Chun's proposal emphasized North-South exchanges including liaison offices, a representative conference to draft a unified constitution, and general elections to establish a unified government.
- ° 11 January 1984--North Korea proposed tripartite talks between the North, South, and the United States to discuss the conclusion of a peace treaty between the United States and North Korea and a declaration of nonaggression between North and South Korea. The response by the South's Unification Minister on 11 January denounced the "violent provocations" of the North, including the explosion in Burma, as being insufficient basis for mutual trust. The South's response did not categorically reject tripartite talks, but said that the two Koreas should "solve by themselves" issues relating to their future.

NOTES

¹For example, see Renmin Ribao, 28 March 1974, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report: China (hereafter FBIS/China), 28 March 1974, pp. A6-7.

²Renmin Ribao, 17 February 1977, in FBIS/China, 22 February 1977, pp. A7-10.

³Xinhua, 7 May 1978, in FBIS/China, 8 May 1978, p. A14.

⁴"Korean Reactions," Japan Times, 30 December 1978, p. 3.

⁵Renmin Ribao, 27 January 1979, in FBIS/China, 29 January 1979, pp. A25-27.

⁶Haptong (Seoul), 7 February 1979 in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report: Asia & Pacific (hereafter FBIS/Asia & Pacific, 7 February 1979, pp. E2-3.

⁷AFP, 13 November 1978, in FBIS/China, 13 November 1978, pp. A7-8.

⁸Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Trends in Communist Media (hereafter FBIS Trends), 18 July 1979, p. 5.

⁹Shijie Zhishi [World Knowledge], 16 April 1980, in FBIS/China, 22 May 1980, pp. D5-8.

¹⁰Jiefangjun Bao editorial, 25 October 1980, in FBIS/China, 27 October 1980, pp. D4-5.

¹¹Xinhua, 24 October 1980, in FBIS/China, 27 October 1980, pp. D1-2.

¹²Xinhua, 10 January 1981, in FBIS/China, 12 January 1981, p. D5.

¹³Renmin Ribao, 22 January 1981, in FBIS/China, 23 January 1981, p. D1.

¹⁴Renmin Ribao, 10 July 1981, in FBIS/China, 14 July 1981, pp. D1-2.

¹⁵Renmin Ribao, 18 November 1981, in FBIS/China, 19 November 1981, pp. D1-2.

¹⁶Renmin Ribao, 30 January 1982, in FBIS/China, 1 February 1982, p. D1.

¹⁷Renmin Ribao, 2 February 1982, in FBIS/China, 3 February 1982, p. D1.

¹⁸Renmin Ribao, 17 February 1982, in FBIS/China, 17 February 1982, p. D1.

¹⁹Xinhua, 20 June 1982, in FBIS/China, 22 June 1982, pp. D1-2.

²⁰Renmin Ribao, 16 September 1982, in FBIS/China, 16 September 1982, pp. D3-4.

- ²¹Xinhua, 20 May 1983, in FBIS/China, 23 May 1983, pp. D1-2.
- ²²Broadcast from Beijing to Korea, 12 July 1983, in FBIS/China, 14 July 1983, p. D1.
- ²³"China-US Peace Feelers on Korea Canceled by Rangoon Bombing," Washington Post, 17 November 1983, p. A21.
- ²⁴"Chinese Middle Men," Far Eastern Economic Review (Hong Kong), 15 December 1983, pp. 16-17.
- ²⁵Xinhua, 11 January 1984, in FBIS/China, 11 January 1984, p. D1.
- ²⁶Renmin Ribao, 13 January 1984, in FBIS/China, 16 January 1984, pp. D1-2.
- ²⁷Beijing International Service, 14 January 1984, in FBIS/China, 16 January 1984, pp. D4-5.
- ²⁸Renmin Ribao, 12 January 1984, in FBIS/China, 13 January 1984, p. B8.
- ²⁹"China Actively Backs Three-Way Talks," Korea Herald (Seoul), 15 January 1984, p. 1.
- ³⁰AFP, 20 January 1984, in FBIS/China, 23 January 1984, pp. D1-2.
- ³¹"North Korean Plea Ignored," Daily Telegraph (London), 28 April 1975, in FBIS/Asia & Pacific, 29 April 1975, p. D1.
- ³²Kyodo, 27 May 1975, in FBIS/China, 27 May 1975, p. A11.
- ³³"Chinese Rule Out Likelihood of War Between Koreans," Washington Post, 12 May 1976, p. A19.
- ³⁴Jiefangjun Bao in a broadcast to Korea, 22 April 1983, in FBIS/China, 26 April 1983, pp. D4-6.
- ³⁵"Peking Told North Korea to Avoid Tension, China's Party Chief Says," Washington Post, 25 November 1983, p. A29.
- ³⁶Renmin Ribao, [no date given], in "China Urges US to Pull Forces Out of Korea," Japan Times, 26 June 1977, p. 1.
- ³⁷Renmin Ribao, 4 May 1981, in FBIS/China, 6 May 1981, pp. B1-2.
- ³⁸FBIS Trends, 30 December 1981, pp. 8-9.
- ³⁹Xinhua, 26 February 1982, in FBIS/China, 1 March 1982, p. D1.
- ⁴⁰FBIS Trends, 23 June 1982, pp. 6-8.
- ⁴¹Xinhua, 2 February 1983, in FBIS/China, 2 February 1983, p. D1.

⁴²"US Interference Chief Obstacle to United Korea," China Daily, 28 July 1983, p. 4.

⁴³Beijing Domestic Service, 13 November 1983, in FBIS/China, 16 November 1983, p. D6.

⁴⁴"China-US Peace Feelers Canceled by Rangoon Bombing," Washington Post, 17 November 1983, p. A21.

⁴⁵"Chinese Urge US to Stay in Korea," Washington Post, 28 February 1976, p. B6.

⁴⁶Tokyo Shimbun, 3 February 1977, in Daily Survey of the Japanese Press, 8 February 1977, p. 15.